THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Yes, sir.

(b) Two agreements were signed with Uzbekistan on 17th August, 191 during Uzbek President Mr. Karimov's visit to India.

(c) The agreement on economic cooperation provides for appropriate measures by both sides to facilitate and develop on a stable and lasting basis inter-change in the economic, commercial, scientific-technological and other spheres.

The agreement on cultural cooperation provides for maintenance and strengthening of mutual cooperation in the fields of culture, arts education, science, tourism sports and mass media.

Indian aid for Nepal and Bhutan

1308. SHRI RATNA BAHADUR RAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state the derails of the aids given to Nepal and Bhutan during 1991-92?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): Projected Aid for Nepal and Bhutan till September, 1991 is as under:

Nepal	— 9,81,50,000-00
Bhutan	— 36,17,50,000-00

Relaxation in the conditions for setting up of New Post Offices in Backward/Hill Areas

1309. SHRI RATNA BAHADUR RAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any relaxation in the conditions for setting up of new post Offices/Branch Post Offices in backward/hill areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The norms for opening of branch offices in normal rural areas are:—

(i) a minimum population of 3000 in a village or a group of villages.

(ii) a minimum of 3 kms from the nearest existing post office.

and (iii) a minimum of 33/1/3 per cent of the estimated cost of the proposed post office.

In hilly, tribal, desert and inaccessible areas the relaxed norms are as follows:

(ii) The population norm is reduced to 500 for a single village or 1000 for a group of villages.

(ii) expected income is reduced to a minimum of 15 per cent of the estimated cost.

and (iii) the criterion of distance can be relaxed in hilly areas in special circumstances.

In the case of departmental sub post office to be opened in the hilly, tribal and backward areas. the permissible limit of loss has been raised to Rs. 4800 per annum as against Rs. 2400 per annum in normal rural areas.

(c) Does not arise.

House Tax on the group Housing Societies Flats in Delhi

1310. DR. RATNAKAR PANDEY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria to calculate house tax on the flats built by Group Housing Societies in Delhi;

(b) whether Government have conducted any survey for the purpose,

in respect of flats of various Group Housing Societies on Outer Ring Road, Pitampura, Delhi;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, by when such a survey is likely to be conducted with a view to finalising the house tax on the flats built by Group Housing Societies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): (a) M.C.D. is levying the property tax which is a per centage of the rateable value of the building. The rateable value of the building is the annual rent for which a property is reasonably expected to be let from year to year. In respect of the flats subject to Delhi Rent Control Act, the rateable value cannot be more than the standard rent determinable under the Delhi Rent Control Act.

(b) and (c) The Government has not conducted any survey for the purpose. However, MCD conducts surveys periodically to assess the properties to property tax and to revise the rateable values wherever necessary.

(d) Notices for revision in the rateable values of the flats constructed upto 31-3-88 and for proposing the rateable values of the flats constructed after 1-4-88 have been issued during the months of February and March 1991 and in the remaining cases notices are under issue.

Fire Safety in Buildings

1311. PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to answer to Unstarred Question 918 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 16th May, 1990 and state:

(a) whether Government have received the report of action taken by each of the State Government;

(b) whether the Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee had conducted tests of some fire-proof doors manufactured in Garmany and recommended its adoption in India about 3 or 4 years back;

(c) whether the National Building Code of India does not contain the compulsory use of fire-proof doors in multistorey buildings, hotels and publice premises; etc.;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the immediate steps to be taken for the use of fire-proof doors instead of fire retardant?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): (a) A number of State including Assam, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, UP Manipur and West Bengal have enacted the Model legislation as circulated by the Ministry.

Delhi has enacted the Fire Prevention and Fire Safety Act, 1986. Daman & Diu are following Goa Fire Service Act. As far as possible the State/UT Governments are following the guidelines as laid down in the National Building Code of India in providing fire protection Measures in the Buildings.

(b) During 1987-88, the Central Building Research Institute has evaluated and approved single leaf and double leaf fire doors of a firm M/s Gerhardt Ruck GMBH & Co., West Germany for fire resistance rating of one and two Hours.

(c) and (d) The National Building Code incorporates recommendations for use of fire resisting doors/fire check doors only. These provisions are advisory and not mandatory.

(e) It is for the State Governments to take appropriate steps in this regard.